Toward a Semasiological account of Evidentials : an Enounciative Approach of -er in Modern Western Armenian

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TOWARDS A SEMASIOLOGICAL ACCOUNT OF EVIDENTIALS: AN ENUNCIATIVE APPROACH OF –*ER* IN MODERN WESTERN ARMENIAN

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Modern Western Armenian[1] (henceforth MWA) has a specific form of completed past whose semantic values are similar to those which have helped found the notion of evidentiality in languages such as Turkish, Albanian, and Bulgarian. Although the facts of Armenian are comparable to those described for the above cited languages, our primary aim is to examine the formal marker associated with evidentiality in MWA as observed in a corpus of spontaneous speech. In so doing, we will reveal certain shortcomings of established theories on evidentiality. Going beyond the description of a particular language, we will address a number of methodological issues concerning the status of the notion of evidentiality in the description of natural languages and will call into question some more or less explicit theoretical presuppositions of the typological approach. Our alternative analysis is based on enunciative[2] and discursive criteria.

1. The MWA data

1.2. The evidential marker in the verbal system of MWA

The phenomena observed in MWA coincide with those found in descriptions of Balkan and Caucasian languages, commonly considered prime examples of languages with evidential markings (e.g. Turkish, Bulgarian, Macedonian, Albanian and Georgian). Before addressing the issues of the semantic and pragmatic values associated with the evidential category, we will first determine its morphosyntactic status within the MWA verb system[3], which will allow us to determine the position of MWA among the languages marking evidentiality.

1. The evidential marker in MWA is a verbal form analogous to the perfect, but while in the perfect we find the participle in –*ac* (*sir-ac en*[4], love-PFT AUX3PL, 'they have loved'), the evidential has a specific non-finite form in –*er* (*sir-er en*, love-EVID AUX3PL, 'they have loved (EVID))'. Thus, while in Persian, Eastern Armenian[5] and even to some extent in Bulgarian[6], 'evidential', having no specific marker, may just

be a label for some contextual meanings of the perfect, in MWA perfect and evidential forms are always distinct synchronically, even though the form in –*er* is a diachronical development of the perfect in Classical Armenian. Thus, it is clear that in MWA, the evidential constitutes a morphosyntactic category. Moreover, the marker is reduced to the binary opposition marked vs. unmarked, in contrast with Tibetan, Korean, Caribbean languages[7] and other languages where the values of the evidential are distributed among a paradigm of markers.

2. Due to its historical origin, this marker only exists in the completed past[8], realized as a non-finite form of the verb (in –*er*) associated with the auxiliary 'to be', and hence as a variant of the perfect or past perfect[9]. In this respect MWA is close to Turkish and Bulgarian, but distinct from Albanian, where the evidential is compatible with all forms of the verbal paradigm.

3. Without prejudging its modal status, we note that the MWA evidential is not compatible with non-actualized modes. All other compound verb forms allow (in appropriate contexts) the alternation between the actualized present form of the auxiliary, *em*, and its non-actualized (known as 'subjunctive') counterpart ëllam. This possibility is not available for the form in –*er*. Yet it is not incompatible with subordination: nominal and adverbial subordinate clauses can have evidential predicates (cf. infra (9) and (10)).

4. No combination of person or number renders the use of the evidential ungrammatical, in contrast to what is observed in Korean and Tibetan.

1.2. Semantico-pragmatic values of the evidential in MWA

An examination of our corpus shows that the values considered characteristic of the evidential in Turkish, Bulgarian and Albanian are also expressed by the –*er* form in MWA. We begin with the most typical values and illustrate them with examples analogous to those often used in descriptions of neighboring languages.

- Hearsay:

The evidential is often found in utterances where the speaker transmits information he or she has heard[10]:

(1) Maro−n <u>amowsnac'−er ê</u>!
     [Maro-ARTDÉF marry-EVID AUX3SG]
     ' Maro <u>has got married</u> (so I heard) !'

Even when the source of information is neither identified nor recoverable, such utterances can have a polyphonous flavor or indicate that the speaker distances himself from the truth of his proposition. It should be noted that this value is the first informants mention when asked about the meanings of the form in –*er*. It is also the interpretation most often proposed by informants in the absence of specific contextual or intonational clues.

- Inference

[On going out, the speaker, unaware that it had been raining, sees that the ground is wet]

(2) Anj'rew <u>ek–er ê</u>
      [Rain come-EVID AUX3SG]
      ' (Look), it has rained ! (rain <u>has come</u>)'

In a similar context, French would express this value by the use of 'tiens!' in combination with a passé composé. The context of the utterance suggests that the assertion about the rain is based on the observation that the ground is wet, i.e. based on a trace of the event. For this reason, this value has often been equated with a logical process of inference[11]. One could wonder, however, whether the inference is not triggered by the context rather than by the form in –er. This particular value can (but need not) be accompanied by exclamatory intonation. This is consistent with the fact that the event is asserted simultaneously with the speaker's becoming aware of it (new information). Using the perfect to refer to the same factual situation is not impossible, but would require a more elaborate context in which the notion of rain had already been introduced (the speaker expected it to rain, rain had been forecast, the speaker wondered whether it would rain, etc.).

- Surprise (also called 'mirative')

[Two old friends come across one another in the street. One of them is with his daughter, whom the other has not seen for some years.]

(3) Aγj'ik–d ê ? <u>Mecc'–er ê</u> /
      [Daughter-POSS2SG be? Grow-EVID AUX3SG]
      'Is that your daughter? (How) she <u>has grown</u>!'

This value requires exclamatory intonation. The speaker is surprised that the girl has grown so much, as he expected her to be smaller. The use of the evidential is motivated by the discrepancy between the speaker's expectations and the actual situation. In general, this value is tied to (positive) evaluative predicates, which is why it has been labeled admirative in descriptions of Albanian. However, it is equally compatible with pejorative predicates (*Gerc'er ê,* 'How much weight she's put on!'). Note that this value combines the contextual constraints of the so-called inferential value (a situation in which the speaker has to become aware of a past situation for which he was not prepared) and purely intonational constraints (the exclamatory intonation is the main defining characteristic of this value).
In the same situational context the perfect in –ac would not express surprise, but rather fulfillment of an expectation ('Indeed, she has grown'). It would be possible as an answer to the question: 'Well, do you think my daughter has changed?'. In this case, the pragmatic force of the answer *Mecc'–ac ê* is merely to specify the semantic content of a predicate already predicated of the subject in the context ('she has changed').

- A continuum of values

As soon as we turn our attention to utterances in context, it becomes clear that the threefold distinction sketched above is not always easy to use. In fact, the assignment of an utterance to one of the categories is often indeterminate, as has been shown by Aksu-Koç & Slobin (1986) in their discussion of the Turkish example *Ahmed gelmi ✦*, 'Ahmed

has come-EVID', which, according to context, can be glossed as either 'Ahmed has come, I was told', 'I see his coat, so Ahmed has come', or 'I didn't expect him to come, but Ahmed has come'.

The following Armenian example (excerpted from a novel) also allows multiple interpretations of the evidential:

(4) *Petros anmij'apês zayn lr'ec'owc', ew katakov lec'own xstowt'eamb më ësaw: – Do Hrač, ësê nayim, as k'ow ëracd kë vaylê?* **norên čočowx më ownec'–er es?**

[again? child-ARTINDEF have-EVID AUX2SG]

'Petros silences him and says with feigned serenity : So, Hratch, tell me, is this the kind of thing one does? **You've had (EVID) yet another child** ? (Chahnour)

Even though the context suggests an interpretation of the evidential as mildly ironic or reproaching ('one does not do that!'), it is still possible to interpret this example as an instance of hearsay ('I heard that…'), inference ('I see that…'), or surprise ('What?, Really?') without any of these interpretations excluding the others. In this example, the ring of reproach is triggered by explicitly mentioned material ('Is this the kind of thing one does?'), but, as shown in (5), the evidential in –*er* can evoke this idea all by itself, in contrast to the perfect in –*ac*.

- The argumentative value

The importance of the context in determining the value of an evidential as well as the fuzziness of the boundaries between the different values clearly show that these same values are not an exhaustive definition of the category. Furthermore we note that the inventory of values given so far is incomplete. The 'reproach' interpretation, which appears as a secondary value in (4) can also be the primary value of the evidential, as in:

[A mother-in-law and her daughter-in-law live in the same house. One afternoon the mother-in-law passes by her daughter-in-law's room and sees her sleeping. A friend comes over for a cup of coffee and asks where the daughter-in-law is.]

(5a) *Par'k–er ê*
[lie down-EVID be-3SG]
'She's lying down' (understood : it's shocking how lazy she is)

(5b) *Par'k–ac ê*
[lie down-PFT be-3SG]
'She's lying down' (understood that this is normal, e.g. she usually rests at this time of day, she's pregnant, she's ill, etc.)

This example shows that the interpretation of 'reproach' or 'argumentative value' should be added to the inventory of semantico-pragmatic values of the evidential. This is a relatively new proposal, as this value has not generally been counted among the central ones in general descriptions of the evidential. Nonetheless, it is not particular to Armenian: Duchet & Përnaska (1996:40-41) cite Albanian examples to which they attribute a value of 'reprise polémique'. Likewise, Meydan (1996:134) discusses 'des

nuances exprimant le doute, la méfiance, l'ironie, la dénégation, l'indignation' for Turkish. This range of values thus seems to be intrinsically linked to the category of evidentials.

In the next section we will examine to what extent the treatment of evidentiality in both general and typological linguistics can do justice to the Armenian data.

2. The notion evidentiality:

- **Form and meaning**

In each of the languages we have mentioned, data similar to those cited above have been given different labels: indeterminate past, admirative, testimonial and constative in traditional grammatical descriptions, and, more recently, evidential and mediative. Furthermore, it is well-known that certain Amerindian languages, such as *Tuyuca* and *Hopi*, make use of a specific morpheme marking whether the speaker has obtained the information s/he asserts by direct perception (either visual or auditory), hearsay, or logical deduction. Since analogous phenomena are attested in languages that are genetically and typologically very distant (Tibetan, Turkish, Bulgarian, Korean, Georgian, etc.), it has been suggested that this category, which Jakobson (1956) dubbed evidential, could be generalized and that 'knowledge source' could be considered as a linguistic category in its own right, as much in general as in typological linguistics:

> "Evidentials refer to the source of information which forms the basis of what we are saying. Do we know what we are saying because we have witnessed it with our own eyes, or because we have heard it from someone ? Did we deduce our information from some sort of evidence, or is it just generally true ?" Van Valin & LaPolla (1997:43)

As soon as general linguistics realizes the importance of the notion of evidentiality, it tends to prefer an onomasiological approach to the category: one first posits the existence of the category and then investigates how it is realized in different languages. According to Chafe & Nichols (1986:VII), this category

> "shows us much about what we might regard as 'natural epistomology', the way in which ordinary people, unhampered by philosophical traditions, naturally regard the source and reliability of their knowledge. Simultaneously, we can learn a great deal about an important ingredient of language itself."

The title of the volume from which this quote is taken, *Evidentiality–The Linguistic Coding of Epistemology*, clearly reflects a position which dominates most of the work on the category (e.g. Guentchéva 1996, Kozintseva 1994, Dendale & Tasmowski 1994, Van der Auwera & Plungian 1988 etc.) and which stresses the cognitive dimension[12] of evidentiality. In most of this work the relation between form and meaning is not central and even when works as Dendale & Tasmowski (1994:3) refer to the form, their requirements remain vague :

"De toutes les fonctions qu'on reconnaît au langage, une des plus importantes est de transmettre de l'information. Cette information peut provenir de sources variées (…). Ces considérations tiennent leur pertinence linguistique du fait qu'il arrive au locuteur, au moment de produire un énoncé, d'y inscrire linguistiquement la provenance de l'information transmise. Il marque alors dans son énoncé la source du savoir que cet énoncé est censé communiquer. Dès lors que la langue dispose de moyens morphologiques et lexicaux spécialisés pour indiquer les sources de l'information qu'on communique, ces sources et ces moyens deviennent des objets d'investigation susceptibles d'intéresser le linguiste."

Guentchéva (1996) is noteworthy in that it is one of the rare works that make a clear terminological distinction between the grammaticalized evidential, i.e. a specific formally identifiable marker in a given language (French: "*le médiatif*[13]"), and epistemic modal meanings of periphrastic verb forms evoked by non-specialized markers and contextual elements ("*l'énonciation médiatisée*[14]"). Most linguists working from a general typological perspective, e.g. Van Valin & LaPolla (1997), Van der Auwera & Plungian (1998), do not make this distinction. However, as long as no explicit account is presented of the formal characteristics (i.e. grammaticalized vs. periphrastic forms) of these categories in natural languages, it is hard to see how one could ligitimize the claim that languages 'encode' a particular category. As a result, the claim that languages encode the 'source of knowledge' is a claim about a morphosyntactic category for those languages where the evidential has been grammaticalized, and a claim about a semantico-pragmatic category for those languages where this semantic value is triggered only in certain contexts and cannot be attributed to a particular marker or a series of markers.

Such an interpretation brings about a second problem. Are 'knowledge' and the processes by which it is acquired (perception, reasoning, or still others) directly relevant to understanding linguistic activity, or are they merely contextual elements indirectly reflected in utterances? We believe that one of the ways to gain access to language understanding is to account for the ways in which the languages of the world organize concepts into formal systems. Thus, from a heuristic viewpoint, it is essential to posit *a priori* that language activity does not merely consist in verbalizing thought, but also in introducing a propositional content into a complex system of enunciative (and not merely referential) coordinates. In other words, we believe that, apart from contributing to a purely interdisciplinary and otherwise legitimate research area, the cognitive approach, rather than analysing the specifically linguistic nature of the markers examined, analyses the contexts in which they can appear. From the descriptive viewpoint, then, the cognitive approach, may foster the illusion of the cognitive iconicity of language, and obscure the true nature of linguistic categories. Friedman (1986:188) is one of the rare authors to raise this question, introducing the 'speaker's attitude' criterion :

"In the languages under discussion [Bulgarian, Albanian, Macedonian], evidentiality does not constitute a generic category on a level with, for example, mood, tense or aspect. Rather, evidentiality is a meaning, whether contextual or invariant, expressed by the generic grammatical category which indicates the speaker's attitude toward the narrated event."

Examination of data from the languages mentioned, as well as from Armenian and Turkish[15] shows that the cognitive theories are unable to predict accurately whether an evidential will be used, given a particular context. Moreover, they hold that direct (especially visual) perception of the asserted information is incompatible with evidential marking. Yet, in example (5), the fact that the mother-in-law has herself seen that her daughter-in-law is asleep, does not prevent her from using an evidential.

Thus, it seems to us essential that a general theory of evidentiality be based on rigorous morphosyntactic analysis, conducted from a semasiological viewpoint: starting from a particular form, we investigate the set of values it expresses in relation to the morphosyntactic oppositions of which it is part.

Granted that the onomasiological approach is indispensible to any serious comparative or typological study, in order to be legitimate, it has to be based on and constantly called into question by semasiological studies of particular languages.

- Evidential vs. mirative

Our criticism of the notion 'source of knowledge' in the description of evidentiality is not entirely new. Many researches have stressed the need to distinguish between the evidential as it is found in certain Amerindian languages and in Tibetan on the one hand, and the marker originating from an older perfect form in what we call Balkan-Caucasian languages on the other hand. The latter marker is typically described as having three values: hearsay[16], inference (these two often cited as central, hence the link to the notion of evidentiality) and surprise or admirative. These authors (Aksu & Slobin 1982, 1986; Ba★turk, Danon-Boileau & Morel 1996; DeLancey 1997) have emphasized the primacy of the surprise or admirative value and have shown that the crucial value in these languages has nothing to do with 'source of knowledge'. DeLancey applies the term *evidential-like* to this category, which he describes (1997:33) as follows: "The fundamental function of the category is to mark sentences which report information which is new or surprising to the speaker, regardless of whether the information source is first- or second-hand."

In distinguishing the admirative from the evidential, DeLancey avoids some of the problems the notion of evidentiality can give rise to. Yet, he cannot avoid all of them. In fact, he consistently makes use of notions which are more cognitive than linguistic: the linguistic message is still seen as reporting a piece of information, and the reliability of it's source has to be measured.

The main merits of this kind of analysis are that (i) it uses notions which are more purely linguistic in that they take into account the speaker's position (the opposition between old and new information introduced in DeLancey (1986) cannot be reduced to objective (perceptual) referential parameters such as seen vs. not seen); (ii) it aims at a unified description of the category without having recourse to the notion of 'reconstructing a (process of) judgment', since this notion cannot account for all uses.

But the notion of new information conveyed by the concept of 'surprise' is subject to what we call the 'referential illusion': it runs the risk of being taken literally. As shown by the Armenian examples, the evidential marker is not rendered ungrammatical when the information is already known to the speaker. What happens in such contexts is simply the activation of another value. This shows that surprise, like source of information, is a

value derived from a common operation which probably needs to be described in more abstract terms.

The notion of 'sideration' ('sidération') coined by Basturk et al. has the merit of escaping from the referential illusion, since it is entirely centered on the speaker[17]. However, it cannot account for the important argumentative value.

3. Towards an enunciative interpretation of evidentiality

In work done jointly with Christine Bonnot (Bonnot et al. 1997; Bonnot & Donabédian 1999) and based on the principles outlined above, we have used relatively abstract notions in trying to develop a hypothesis that captures the fundamental operation common to all uses of the marker. Starting from this common operation, all the different attested values should be predictable considering contextual, lexical, aspectual and intonational parameters[18].

In our respective works on the evidential in MWA (Donabédian 1996a, 1996b) and on Russian sentences with initial stress[19] (Bonnot & Seliverstova 1995), we noted that in both languages these utterances, although formally marked in a very different way, tend to appear in similar contexts with analogous values. The novelty of the work done with Bonnot to follow up on this observation lies in the method adopted: we manipulated a number of utterances and their contexts from corpora in both languages and presented them to native speakers in order to establish the similarities and differences between both markers. We found that the differences could be explained by the fact that in MWA, the marker is limited to the completed past, whereas in Russian it is available in all types of utterances. The comparison of these phenomena in two different languages (no one has ever posited the existence of either an evidential category or a marker of the source of knowledge for Russian) led us to look for a common basis that could explain the convergence of these pragmatic values in both languages. It became clear that the values associated with the marker in MWA are fare more diverse than what is covered by descriptions based on the evidential hypothesis, which cannot account for values such as the argumentative, causal, appreciative, free indirect speech etc.[20], even though these cannot simply be regarded as marginal.

We will first summarize the hypothesis developed in Bonnot, Donabédian & Seliverstova (1997) and Bonnot & Donabédian (1999) before confronting it with a type of data we have not used so far, viz. a corpus of recorded spontaneous speech.

3.1. Bonnot & Donabédian (1997,1999)

Our contrastive research on MWA and Russian has led us to postulate an operation underlying the use of the evidential marker, which can be characterized as follows:

Consider a type of assertion we will provisionally label 'typical'[21]: the speaker has at his/her disposal a propositional content that already obtains before utterance time, in other words a piece of old information which has already been integrated into his/her background knowledge (or which, to put it in still other terms, is stable in the sense that its contents and truth value have already been determined) and communicates this to the hearer. In contrast to this type of assertion, utterances with the evidential marker, although equally assertive, are characterized by the fact that when the speaker validates (or presents as true) his propositional content P (or whatever relationship s/he establishes

between subject and predicate) s/he simultaneously discards a competing propositional content (P') (in this case not-P) which is also activated in the context.

In other words, the truth value of P (what is reported using the evidential) is not called into question, but is given a contrastive flavor.

This contrastiveness does not bear on one of the arguments of the utterance, as in focus constructions, but rather on the relationship between subject and predicate itself—which is consistent with the evidential's status as a verbal marker—and thus directs us towards an interpretation which is modal rather than referential.

As a result, utterances using the evidential may, in contrast to assertions that communicate a stable piece of information, be entirely deprived of informational value (cf. (2), (3), (6) et seq.). In Jakobson's terminology, these are utterances where the conative and expressive functions far outweigh the referential function.

The diversity of values utterances marked with the evidential can take on derives mainly from the diversity of modes in which P and (P') can be present. In (2) and (3), both P and (P') are part of the speaker's knowledge pool, but (P') corresponds to an earlier state of consciousness which the speaker, in the light of an unanticipated situation, can no longer regard as adequate. Nonetheless, the choice to express P with an evidential marker clearly introduces this propositional content (P') which the speaker, even though he does not assert it, cannot entirely remove from his/her knowledge pool. This is what triggers the mirative values (surprise etc.). It is equally possible to have a context where (P') is part of some generally accepted norm (deriving e.g. from socio-cultural codes or common world knowledge). This explains the value judgment underlying the interpretation of (5): the mother-in-law asserts P ('she's asleep'), but suggests that there is a contradictory viewpoint (P') ('a young woman should not sleep during the day, that is the norm'). Finally, when (P') is part of the hearer's knowledge pool (or presented as such by the speaker), this gives rise to the argumentative values observed in (6) and following.

It is only when nothing in either the context or the situation allows identification of (P') that the evidential takes on the hearsay interpretation: in this case, the opposition between (P') and P invoked by the evidential can only be interpreted in terms of the speaker distancing himself from the validity of his utterance ('I assert P, but as far as I know, P' could be true) either by invoking a third party (hearsay), or by casting doubt on the truth of P (cf. (1)). Our corpus shows, however, that the latter two values cannot be regarded as basic to the category: examples like (6) most often do not confer doubt or distancing on the part of the speaker, though they clearly belong to the same category from a formal viewpoint.

This being the case, one might wonder why both traditional grammars and native speaker responses tend to interpret the evidential mainly as a marker of hearsay or doubt. It seems to us that the absence of strict contextual and intonational constraints for this value accounts for the fact that it is easily turned to in metalanguage, out of context. The other values, even if they are more frequent, require a more elaborate scenario and are therefore less likely to occur when native speakers reflect on their language out of context. Nonetheless, we do not believe that this is sufficient reason to claim that hearsay and doubt are among the most typical values of the evidential marker.

3.2. Confronting the hypothesis with a corpus of spontaneous speech

An examination of the Kasparian corpus (1982-90)[22] has allowed us to confirm our hypothesis. First, it shows that in discourse, the degree of informativeness of evidentially marked utterances is mostly marginal, not to say non-existent, and that the truth value of P is not directly affected by the evidential.

[Three students are fixing a bicycle. After having worked some time in silence, A, who conducts the repairs, is getting slightly irritated and says to B, who is trying to hold the bicycle still] (S.K. 1/209)

(6)   *Okay, es br'ne↗r e↘m, jgê↗, jgê↗ dow↘n, kec'ir nayink'∷*
         [I take-EVID AUX1SG]
         'Okay, I've got (EVID) it, (you) let go, let go, wait, let's see…'

Here, the fact that the speaker has got the bicycle is visible to all participants. Even thought the context is limited (the utterance is isolated, framed by silences), the situation can explain the use of the evidential: A is holding the bicycle (while fixing it) but sees that B is blocking it. Thus he asserts es br'ne↗r em (P = 'I've got it', which pragmatically corresponds to 'It won't fall') with the evidential introducing a content (P') attributed to B ('the bicycle can fall so I must hold it'). This is confirmed by the injunction 'Let go' and by the marked contrast between the 1st (*es*) and 2nd (*down*) person pronoun subjects[23]. Here, P and (P') are entertained by the speaker and hearer respectively, which yields the argumentative value.

[Bicycle repair scene: they are looking for the right wrench but cannot seem to find it. Without much conviction, B comes forward with a wrench that obviously will not do] (S.K. 1/431)

(7)   *B. - This one ?*
         A. – Gte↗r ê↘ir k'ič ar'aj' vis më
         [find-EVID AUX-PAST2SG]
         -'But you (had) found (EVID) one, just a second ago.'
         B. – Va¸y j'γers∷j'γers
         -'Oh, my nerves, my nerves !'
         A. – K'ič ar'aj' vis më gter êir
         [find-EVID AUX-PAST2SG]
         -'Just a second ago, you (had) found (EVID) one.'

Here, too, the utterance containing the evidential does not add any new information. The evidential has an adversative function (apparent in the translation 'but'). Like B, A knows that this wrench will not do, and this exasperates B. Here, the idea that there is no right wrench is entertained by B, as is clear from his subsequent reply "my nerves, my nerves!". In reminding B that earlier, the right wrench had been found, A posits its existence P and thus introduces a propositional content contradicting B's opinion (P'). In this case, the context strongly favors the use of –*er* and it would have to be altered signicantly in order for the perfect in –*ac* to become plausible, e.g. by switching to the 3d person (so that the information could be unknown to B) or by contrastively focusing on one of the utterance's arguments rather than on the entire predicative relation ('*you had found one **here***').

[Same situation; A jerks back a part that had already been fixed] (S.K. 1/718)

(8) B. – *What are you doing? Don't break it again!*

A. – Artên <u>awrowe↗r ê↘</u> norên

[already break-EVID AUX3SG again]

- 'It <u>is</u> already <u>broken</u> (EVID) again !'

B fears that A is ruining the bike. A asserts that the part in question is broken again P, taking into account the fact that B believes the opposite (P'). The assignment of P and (P') to speaker and hearer respectively, again triggers an adversative value. Here too, the specifics of the context hardly allow alternation with –*ac*. Yet, leaving out norên, 'again' would make use of the perfect in –*ac* possible with an interpretation under which 'it is already broken' is known by all participants.

Thus, in (6), (7) and (8), the propositional content of the utterance containing the evidential is already shared by the discourse participants and the evidential does not affect the truth value of P: it is the speaker who takes on the responsibility for the propositional content he is asserting and for its truth value. But he does this in order to argue, rather than provide information.

Neither the notion 'source of knowledge' nor the 'mirative' hypothesis—both of which are centered around the notion of information—can account for the way these examples function in the discourse. Most of the time, the speaker shows his stance towards a fact present in the situation or towards an attitude of the hearer. The argumentative, contrastive and adversative values, which no traditional description takes into account and which no available theory can explain, is quite frequent in our corpus (about 30% of –*er* utterances). In (9), it even occurs in a subordinate clause:

[A young couple is lazing in bed one morning. They are a bit edgy. He is reading a magazine that she has already read. Knowing that she normally likes to keep the numerology pages, he asks] (S.K. 9/51)

(9) He: - *You want to keep the numerology pages?*

She: - *If you can, and if you will, go ahead, keep them!*

He: -Et'ê <u>kardac'er es</u> nê čem paher, et'ê čes kardac'<u>ac</u> ëë k'ez t'oγ ëllay

nowêr   [if read-EVID AUX2SG]

'If you have read (EVID) them, I won't keep them ; if you haven't (PFT), ehm, okay, I'll give them to you as a present.'

It is clear that she wants him to keep the pages but that she does not want to ask a favor of him. In using the evidential, he is invoking a hypothesis P (linked to a refusal: '*if you've read them, I won't keep them*') which he knows to be contradictory to the wish (P') he attributes to his interlocutor. Note that the consensual hypothesis ('*if you haven't read them, I'll give them to you*'), invoked in the second part of the utterance, is expressed using a perfect rather than an evidential. Moreover, the evidential in the first part ('if you've read it') entails the explicit mention of the alternative ('if you haven't read it'), which would not be the case if a perfect in –*ac* were used.

Elsewhere, this spoken corpus confirms the enunciative constraints on theme/rheme segmentation we discussed in Bonnot et al. (1998). There, we claimed that these

utterances cannot be segmented into theme and rheme by a pause[24]. The reason is that what is turned into one of the terms of the contrastive opposition P/(P') is the entire predicative relation, which is viewed as a whole and can therefore not be split into theme and rheme. Thus, in (1), the evidential leads to an interpretation of the utterance as a single whole (gloss: 'it so happened that Maro got married'), whereas use of the perfect in –*ac* would lead us to relate some property or event to the theme 'Maro'. Likewise, as we have shown in (3) above, use of the perfect boils down to varying the predicate linked to a given theme, whereas the evidential expresses surprise at an observation construed as a whole.

The only exception to this formal constraint are utterances where the contrastive element of P bears on linking a rheme to a specific theme. This is what happens in (10), where the unusual comma between subject and predicate explicitly segments the utterance:

(10)

K'ičer miayn nšec'in, or geγi eresên inkac <u>18 tarekan lakotê</u>, sewta <u>êr k ap–er</u> Srapenc' pztik harsin ew yačax aγbiwri čamban nazanin anc'nelown kë spasêr:

'Few people noticed that this <u>18-year-old scamp</u>, scorned by the village <u>had (EVID) fallen</u> in love with daugher-in-law Srapian, and that he would often wait for his beauty on the way to the well.' (*Hamastegh, First Love*)

There is a contrast between the insignificant image of the boy and what is predicated of him: he has a love affair with the most coveted young lady of the village. This type of utterance would yield structures like 'Tu sais, Paul, eh ben il s'est acheté une Mercedes!' in spoken French.

The complex narrative structure of (10) (evidential in a subordinate clause, indirect speech open to several interpretations: the contents can be attributed to the narrator as well as to rumor) makes it rather atypical, since most utterances containing an evidential are short, isolated, and typically found in spoken discourse. With regard to utterances in context, analysis of the Kasparian corpus confirms our claim: no examples with a pause between subject and predicate were found. On the contrary, one often finds utterances without a theme, e.g.:

- Word order is inverted and the verb in the evidential is initial (whereas the canonical order in MWA is SOV) and bears clausal stress, while the rest of the utterance has the intonational contour of an interpolated or post-rhematic clause (low pitch and intensity and accelerated delivery after the falling tone). This is the case in (7) above, as well as in:

[Looking for tools to fix the bicycle, S is going through some of her friend's stuff. She finds a small purse and says] (S.K. 1/348)

(11) - Hmm, as anowšik ê, <u>mor'c'e↗r ê↘i</u> ays payowsakd/ [forget-EVID AUX1SG]
   - 'Hm, that's cute, <u>I'd forgotten (EVID)</u> you had a purse like that !'

- Neither the subject nor the object is expressed, so the verb is in initial position. In this case, as in (11), the verb in the evidential has rising intonation, while the rest has the contour of an interpolation (cf. (8) supra, (18) infra).

- The utterance has a clause-initial interrogative, as in (12), (13), (16) and (19).

(12) – Asika inči? hamar ê, inčow↗? pa↘her <u>em as</u>, čem giter inč k'ënen hetë:::

                [why keep-EVID AUX1SG DEICT1]

'– What's this for? <u>Why have I kept (EVID) this,</u> I don't even know what it's for…'

(13) A. – We've hired a boat with the P's and we'll spend ten days on the Breton isles.

    B. – That's nice !

    C. - I?nčpês tasë ôr, i↗?nč' ba↘teau varjer êk'

                [what boat hire-EVID AUX2PL]

    C. 'Ten days? What kind of boat have you hired?'

In both utterances, the question word, due to its association with the evidential, suggests that there is no propositional content to justify the predication: (12) suggests there is no reason to keep such an object, while (13) suggests that a common boat is no place to stay for ten days.

- When there is a constituent that could take on the role of theme, the evidential blocks a segmented realization, regardless of whether the possible theme is a subject (14), a locative (15) or an object (16):

(14) A. – As č'i var'ir <u>kor</u> hima al:

    'This one, it's no longer on (PROGR.).'

    B. – As inč'ow, amên inč' teɣn ê, inčow? č'i var'ir:

    – 'Why? Everything's okay ; why won't it work ?'

    A. – Lampë ov gitê <u>awrower? ê</u>:

    [bulb-ARTDEF perhaps blow-EVID AUX3SG]

    'Perhaps the bulb has blown.'

    (* – Lampë // ov gitê <u>awrower? ê</u>:)

(15)– K'ani? šabat' eɣaw ktrec'ir, šowtên k'erknnay kor, ha?, <u>asteɣ ančap' erknc'e</u>
<u>r êr</u>, tesar i?nč ëri, či tesar hos?   [there much grow-EVID AUX-PAST3SG]

- 'How many weeks has it been since you last cut it; it grows so fast, doesn't it? It had grown so much, didn't you see what I did there, didn't you see?'

(* asteɣ // ančap' erknc'er êr)

[Chatting over a drink. B tells A he's going to Italy and invites him to go with him.] (S.K. 5b/14)

(16) A. – 'Me, me, until I get my papers, in my situation, I don't leave the country to run about trying to get a visa at the last minute !'

B. - Amên frontières–nerë <u>haner en</u> douane–in, drami hamar ewropayi:::
[all borders <u>remove-EVID AUX3PL.</u>]
- 'The have removed all customs borders, because of the European currency…'

A. - <u>I?↗nč ha↘ner en</u>:
'What have they removed (EVID)?'

(* Amên frontières–nerë // <u>haner en</u>)

Finally, the corpus reveals an affinity between the evidential and the progressive which squares well with our hypothesis. We have repeatedly stressed the commonalties between those languages where the evidential marker originates from an older perfect form. Moreover, it is well-known that certain languages express the contextual values the evidential can take on by means of the perfect (e.g. Classical Armenian, Eastern Armenian and also Persian). The main characteristic of the perfect in the tense systems where it exists—and where it often functions in opposition with a dynamic aorist—is that, even if it refers to a past event, it does not create a past narrative, but rather comments on the present: given that a past event took place, the perfect comments on the present by positing the relevance of the past event to the present situation. It seems quite plausible that this fundamental 'commenting' value served as the basis for the more specific values of the evidential in these languages, even though it later gave rise to a specialized morpheme. In MWA, the 'comment' value appears in another part of the verbal system, viz. in the postposed verb particle *kor* (which Eastern Armenian does not have). Cohen (1989:99) has already observed a formal parallelism between these two categories in certain Semitic languages, where the progressive is the non-completed modal counterpart of the perfect. It seems that in MWA, likewise, the progressive functions as the non-completed counterpart of the perfect (of which the evidential is simply a specialized form). The progressive cannot simply be reduced to a processual and durative aspectual category. Granted that in French, 'être en train de' has a modal value besides an aspectual one[25], the former is even more pronounced in MWA. The compatibility of the progressive with stative verbs, as shown in (17), and even with 'know', as shown in (20) clearly shows that it is different from the French and English progressives in that it is more modalized. It is also noteworthy that *kor* is not incompatible with the generic present[26].

The corpus shows that there is a strong affinity between the progressive and the evidential: in (15) above, the same verb appears twice in the same sequence, first in the progressive (to refer to a non-completed process: 'the hair is growing fast') and then in the evidential (referring to a completed event: 'it has grown a lot'). In (17), the narrative in the present contains a lot of progressives, before an evidential appears:

[S is telling how, one day, she was very tired when she returned home by bike. Yet, out of pride, she forced herself to pedal all the way, without getting off the bike. But when she got to a steep rise very near her home] (S.K. 1/444)

(17) – Odk'ers čem zgar <u>kor</u>, vélo–n minakë k'alê <u>kor</u> , quoi, au ralenti, 1 km/h, ov gitê asank, ouin, kamac' kamac' asank, <u>mer'er êi</u>, verj'ên Parc Montsouris hasay nê, ësi owzacnin ësen, k'ij'nam:

- 'I can't feel-PROGR my feet anymore, the bike moves- PROGR all by itself… so… very slow, 1 km/h, like that… I was dead [had die-EVID]; finally I got to Parc Montsouris; I said let them say whatever they want, I'm getting off.'

Similarly, in (18)
[Inspection of the bicycle's lamps: A turns the wheels, while B and C inspect the front and back lamps] (S.K. 1/538-542)

(18) B. - Voilà, voilà atika var'ec'aw   'Look, look, this one is on [shine-AOR].'
A. – Var'i <u>kor</u>?   'It's on [shine-PROGR.]?'
B. - Ha/, ha/, <u>var'er ê</u>   'Yeah, yeah, it's on [shine-EVID]!'
C.– Etewinë <u>var'er ê</u>   'The one at the back is on [shine-EVID]!'

the verb ('it is shining'), appearing first in the aorist, is repeated in the progressive to ask for confirmation ('is it really on?' literally: 'is it shining?') and finally in the evidential ('yes indeed, it is really on!'). Likewise in (14) above, the first observation (the adversative 'look here, it's no longer on') is in the progressive. If one wanted to describe the same factual situation in terms of a completed process, one could have used in the same context: marer ê [go out-EVID, AUX3SG], as in (19):

[Trying to fasten the brake shoes] (S.K. 1/703)

(19) - No, that's the problem, this black thing, because it's over here, it can't go there.
- This one's fallen too.
- Watch what you're doing.
- Damned!
– Inčpês <u>eɣer ê</u> hos <u>eker ê</u> asi
[how be-EVID AUX3SG here come-EVID AUX3SG DEICT1]
'How did this end up [become-EVID] over here [come-EVID]?'

If (19) is modified so that the second verb is present, the evidential becomes a progressive (– Inčpês <u>eɣer ê</u> hos <u>kow gay kor</u> asi). Compare also (20):

[On the phone, planning where and when to meet to go out that evening; A is on the phone, while B is asking him questions in order to follow what's being said] (S.K. 2b/5)

(20) A. – Hello, yes …
B. Is it P?
A. Yeah, yeah.
B. What's he saying?
A. >em giter <u>kor</u>, P–in č'enk' krnar <u>kor</u> gtnel, amen aten occupé ê kam al <u>débranché ërer en</u> :::
'I don't know-PROGR, we can't-PROGR get hold of R, it's always busy or disconnected [made-EVID disconnected].'

Here, both verbs, one in the progressive ('we can't get hold of her'), the other in the evidential ('they have disconnected the phone') function on the same level: they are juxtaposed and evoke similar subjective values, the first with reference to a non-completed, the second with reference to a completed event. The link is even clearer in :

[A couple lazing away in bed. She is thinking out loud (isolated utterance)] (S.K. 9/42)

(21) As fatalité–n mezi erkowk'nis irarow <u>kaper ê</u> xntay <u>kor</u> vranis:
       'This fate, it has brought-EVID the two of us together, (and) it's mocking-PROGR us.'

where the progressive and evidential are juxtaposed without an intervening conjunction.
It would be interesting to analyze the functions of the MWA progressive in *kor*, which seems to convey a modal value quite close to that of the evidential, in that the speaker recognizes the existence of a competing viewpoint which is activated by the context or the situation. Such an analysis is beyond the scope of this paper, but it could elucidate the evidential's position within the MWA verb system using criteria that are quite different from those used in the traditional analyses of the marker in neighboring languages.

Conclusion

We have attempted to present a semasiological treatment of the evidential category by analyzing its specific marker in MWA. This approach has confirmed the points raised in the first part of this paper, viz.:
1. The hypothesis centered around the 'source of knowledge', which lies at the heart of the notion of 'evidential' is both theoretically disputable and unable in practice to provide a unified treatment of the way the MWA marker of this category functions.
2. The hypothesis centered around given vs. new information and surprise (DeLancey), or 'sideration' (Danon-Boileau), though it is theoretically more satisfactory, cannot account for all the different uses attested in our corpus of spoken MWA either.

The enunciative hypothesis we propose is based on a fairly abstract schema which allows us to predict the entire range of values (objective, subjective, emotional, interactional) as a function of parameters that are, broadly speaking, contextual (factual situation, presuppositions, discourse participant, shared knowledge, speaker attitude, but also lexical elements, the kind of process involved, intonation, etc.). Thus, it illustrates several theoretical options:
1. the need to explain linguistic phenomena in terms of concepts which are specific to linguistic activity (rather than tied to cognitive activity in general), especially when these phenoma involve the use of a specific grammatical marker, as in our MWA data.
2. the refusal to group the different semantico-pragmatic values evoked by a category into a hierarchy having both central/prototypical and peripheral/derived values—such hierarchies, when used in typological linguistics, being most of the time intuitive rather than based on explicit criteria.

3. the refusal to separate discursive (or pragmatic) phenomena from morphosyntactic phenomena in the analysis of a marker.

We believe that our hypothesis also provides a valuable heuristic tool, in that:
1. From a descriptive viewpoint, it is superior to earlier theories, as shown by our corpus analysis.
2. From the viewpoint of linguistic typology, or more generally, the study of linguistic universals and cross-linguistic variability, recourse to the notion of enunciation allows us to embed the theory on the evidential into a general theory on assertion, which might shed light on the difference between 'neutral' assertions in languages having an evidential category and those lacking one.
3. Finally, in tackling the analysis of the category in enuciative rather than referential or iconic terms (cf. the cognitive hypothesis' focus on the circumstances under which the speaker has gathered the information s/he communicates) our hypothesis permits us to embed the analysis of the evidential into a global analysis of temporal-aspectual and modal categories (cf. the links we observed with both the perfect and the progressive) and can thus shed new light on the analysis of these categories.

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[1] There are two standard forms of Modern Armenian: Eastern Armenian, the official language of the Republic of Armenia, also spoken by the Armenians of Iran and Western Armenian, the standard language of the Ottoman Empire until 1915, now spoken in Armenian communities throughout the world.

[2] French term 'énonciation', introduced by Benveniste and Culioli, is sometimes translated to english as 'uttering act'. We prefer to remain closer to the original term, and speak about 'enunciation', as done in the english edition of Culioli's seminar published by J. Benjamins in 1995.

[3] For a dialectological survey, historical account and analysis of the position within the MWA verb system of the forms under discussion, see Donabédian (1996b, 1999).

[4] For the transcription of Armenian, we make use of the Hübschmann-Meillet-Benveniste transliteration, which is widely used by Armenologists, even though it is not the best system to transcribe Western Armenian pronunciation.

[5] We do not follow Kozintseva (1997), who posits the existence of an evidential category in Eastern Armenian, since the semantic values commonly associated with evidentiality are not tied to a specific marker in this language, but rather associated with the perfect under certain contextual and intonational conditions.

[6] Where the distinction between perfect and evidential can depend on the category of person.

[7] See Chafe & Nichols (1986) and Guentchéva (1996).

[8] Though there is a particle ε=ερ, which is compatible with any predicate, its values are more restricted than those of the –er paradigm. This will be the subject of future work.

[9] The evidential marker has its own aspectual characteristics (as discussed in Donabédian 1998) which may, in certain contexts, coincide with those of the perfect or the aorist.

[10] ARTDEF/ARTINDEF = definite/indefinite article; AUX = auxiliary; 1,2,3 = person (verbs) or degree (deixis); SG/PL = number; EVID = evidential; PFT = perfect; POSS = possessive; PROGR = progressive; PRST = present; AOR = aorist; DEICT = deictic; [text] = glosses/literal translations; *italics* = original text; 'text' = translation.

[11] Jean-Pierre Desclés has suggested that this operation is an instance of abduction rather than inference. But regardless of its precise status, such a description still involves an appeal to logical thought. Note, however, that what is asserted is only the phenomenon 'rain' and not the logical operation itself, which is contextual.

[12] To be taken in the sense of Fitneva (this volume), who explicitly opposes 'cognitive hypothesis' to 'speaker's attitude', i.e. an approach that focusses on how the information conveyed by the utterance is acquired rather than on the conditions and various options available to the speaker which lead to the production of an utterance in context.

[13] Guenthéva prefers this term (coined by Lazard 1956) over 'evidential' for reasons we subscribe to. First, in French, where the word 'evidence' has a different meaning than its English equivalent 'evidence', it is a misnomer. Second, it implies a purely onomasiological approach, which we will criticize in what follows. In our previous works, we have consistently used the term 'mediative'. Here, we will use the term 'evidential' to bring our terminology closer to standard conventions and to avoid the impression that the Armenian category we describe is in any way different from that labeled 'evidential' in the languages mentioned earlier, which would considerably weaken our claims.

[14] , 'The mediatized utterance', title of the 1996 volume.

[15] See the papers on these languages in Chafe & Nichols (1986) and Guentcheva (1996).

[16] The 'mythic narration' value being a variant of the latter.

[17] Note that this work is also corpus-based.

[18] It is no coincidence that our analysis grew out of the comparison of a segmental morphological marker in MWA and a prosodic marker in Russian, as the latter is also limited to spoken language and its main function goes beyond the transmission of information.

[19] The canonical stress pattern in Russian is sentence-final.

[20] For reasons of space, we refer the reader to the references for illustrative examples of these values.

[21] This kind of assertion is presented here as typical only in that it provides a convenient standard in comparison to which evidential utterances stand out clearly. An exhaustive account of the evidential would obviously require it to be integrated into a general theory of assertion, which is not available at present. Consequently, our use of the notion 'typical' assertion is simply provisional and has no theoretical status whatsoever.

[22] The corpus used here was compiled and transcribed by S. Kasparian for her dissertation on code switching among Armenians living in Paris (Kasparian 1992). Recorded MWA material is scarce, due to the fact that the linguistic competence of speakers tends to decline rapidly in the diaspora. Furthermore, isolated utterances are hard to gather, as they require extensive recording. The corpus is suitable for our purposes, since the interactions recorded seem to favor the occurrence of evidentials (over 35 instances in approximately three hours of speech). In our opinion (confirmed by native speakers) the abundance of loan words and alternations with French do not affect the pragmatic and morphosyntactic reliability of the data. It is, moreover, significant that code switching with French do not affect the frequency of evidential in this corpus.

[23] Since the auxiliaries are marked for person, the utterance would be grammatical without the pronouns. Their presence is therefore marked.

[24] We do not interpret the theme/rheme distinction in terms of the semantics of the predication (which would allow every subject constituent to be regarded as a thematic), but rather in terms of the enunciative organisation of the message (cf. Bonnot (1997) where every utterance which does not allow a pause between its subject and predicate is considered to be entirely rhematic).

[25] Cf. examples like 'Mais qu'est-ce que tu es en train de faire?', 'Tu vois bien que je suis en train de travailler!', mentioned in Franckel (1989:174-176) as illustrative of the progressive's capability to evoke 'disagreement'.

[26] One might wonder whether 'progressive' is the right term for these cases. Yet it is precisely in the absence of lexical and contextual constraints that *kor* acquires this value, just like the past in *–er* acquires an 'evidential' value in the absence of lexical and contextual constraints. Thus, even if we admit that the definitions of both the evidential and the progressive still need elaboration, we will provisionally stick to these labels. In fact, to the extent that the phenomena we describe are identical to those subsumed under the respective labels in numerous other languages, our use of the labels 'evidential' and 'progressive' facilitates a comparison with data and theories from research on language universals and cross-linguistic variability. In a framework where the singularity of the marker is the basis of the search for a single fundamental operation (which will inevitably be rather abstract) notional labels like 'progressive' or 'evidential' can ultimately be nothing more than a matter of convention, since they can never replace an exhaustive description of the marker in question.